

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am returning Senate Bill 851 without my signature.

Although the provisions of this bill are to be implemented contingent upon the availability of funds, this bill would place a tremendous cost pressure on the General Fund to increase mental health services provided to inmates and parolees. The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation estimates annual costs for the staff necessary to implement this bill would exceed \$14 million annually.

While I agree that more efforts need to be made to ensure that prisoners with mental health issues receive appropriate treatment, this bill allows people who have committed crimes to avoid punishment completely because of a mental health issue. This bill would also enable a defendant to not enter a plea or make an admission of guilt.

The mental health courts model specified in this bill is an important component of public safety and for managing our criminal justice system and I hope that the author will continue to work on mental health issues, especially as it relates to mentally ill criminal offenders so that California can reduce recidivism rates and provide proper treatment for healthier citizens.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger